

representatives form every kind of State—Kingdoms, Republics, Socialist States, Communist States—can meet under the elastic constitution of the new International Labour Organisation, and agree upon standards of working conditions for the benefit of the people of the whole world. Goodwill alone is essential to the fulfilment of the ideals of the Labour Organisation. The Washington Conference gave substantial promise that goodwill among men of different races and nationalities, which has been conspicuously absent from so many International Conferences in the past, is not only attainable, but that it is in process of realisation.

Studies and Reports already issued:

1° In English and in French.

COAL PRODUCTION IN THE RUHR DISTRICT. Enquiry by the International Labour Office, end of May 1920. (Series B No 1, issued on September 1st, 1920.)

STAFF REGULATION ON THE FRENCH RAILWAYS. (Series D No 1, issued on September 4th, 1920.)

THE CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN 1919. (Series H No 1, issued on September 8th 1920.)

SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE. (Series H No 2, issued on September 25th, 1920.)

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SPANISH WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS. (Series A No 1, issued on September 25th, 1920.)

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKERS IN THE FOOD AND DRINK TRADES. (Series A No 4, issued on October 11th, 1920.)

THE MINERS' INTERNATIONAL. (Series A. No 7, issued on October 19th, 1920.)

2° In English only (1).

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS 1920. (Series A. No 3, issued on October 4th, 1920.)

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. (Series A. No 5, issued on October 13th, 1920.)

3° In French only (1).

LE CONFLIT DES MÉTALLURGISTES EN ITALIE. — LE CONTRÔLE SYNDICAL DANS L'INDUSTRIE. (Series A. No 2, issued on September 25th, 1920.)

DOCUMENTS RELATIFS AUX PROJETS D'ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA RÉPARTITION DES MATIÈRES PREMIÈRES OU DES DENRÉES ALIMENTAIRES. (Series B No 2, issued on October 5th, 1920.)

LE CONGRÈS DE L'INTERNATIONALE OUVRIÈRE ET SOCIALISTE. (Series A. No 6, issued on October 14th, 1920.)

(1) In cases where the French or English text of a Report has not yet been published, it will be issued at a later date.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE GENEVA

Studies and Reports

Series A

No. 9

October 22th, 1920.

The International Congress of Metal Workers.

The International Federation of Metal Workers held its eighth congress at Copenhagen from August 20th to 26th.

This Federation, which is one of the most important of the organisations affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam, has seen its membership increase from 1,100,000 members in 1914 to 2,500,000 at the end of 1919.

It publishes a monthly bulletin, "The International Metal Workers' Review" in three languages, the circulation of which was maintained during the war by the help of the Swiss and Danish Trade Unions.

The Copenhagen Congress, which was the first held since 1913, had, as its principal object, the reorganisation of the International Federation. The Secretariat had continued in Germany during the war but the activity of the Federation had been interrupted by the refusal of the British organisations to continue relations with the German and Austrian organisations, even through neutrals.

Although the date of the Congress had been twice postponed not all of the affiliated organisations were present. Consequently the Congress was not as representative as might have been wished. Discussion was, however, carried on with interest, and important resolutions were adopted.

The most difficult question, that of the transfer of the seat of the Federation to a neutral country and the appointment of fresh officers, gave rise during the opening days to long discussions both in committee and in plenary session. There were times when agreement on these essential points seemed doubtful.

A resolution on international relations which was to mark out a clear course for the future gave rise to a long discussion at the end of which the various points of view were so harmonised that a unanimous vote was secured.

A motion on the eight hour day, demanding the ratification of the Washington Conventions, was unanimously adopted without discussion.

Although the points of view and the nationalities seemed, especially at the beginning, to be in rather sharp conflict, the sessions presided over by Messrs. Hansen (Denmark), Solau (Belgium), and Reichel (Germany) were quite calm and the discussion was conciliatory and courteous.

The very hearty reception given by the Danish Federation to those attending the Congress and the visits to the remarkable institutions set up in the country by the trade union organisation, labour halls, co-operative societies, printing works, etc., contributed to bring the various delegations together and the Congress closed in a spirit of very marked solidarity.

Representation. — The following countries were represented at the Congress: Germany, Austria, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia, Belgium, France, Denmark, Holland.

The report on the examination of credentials showed 49 delegates present, representing 11 countries, 16 organisations and 2,168,307 members.

The International Labour Office was represented by a delegate sent from Geneva to attend the Congress.

Agenda of the Congress. — The agenda of the Congress included the following questions:—

1. Constitution of the Congress.
2. Report of the Secretary and discussion.
3. International Relations.
4. Discussion of the Constitution.
5. Choice of the seat of the Federation and of the Secretary.

Proposals regarding the re-organisation of the Federation and the revision of the Constitution had been sent by the English and Belgian Federations. The International Secretary, moreover, presented a detailed report.

THE OPENING SESSION.

The First Session opened under the presidency of Mr. J. A. Hansen, the President of the Metal Workers' Union of Denmark. Welcoming the delegates he drew attention to the interest presented by this reconstitution of the Trade Union International immediately following on the war.

After nominating Committees responsible for presenting draft resolutions on the principal questions on the Agenda, the

President informed the Congress of the reasons which had prevented several countries from sending representatives.

The affiliated organisation in Great Britain had not been able to send delegates because of the important meetings which were taking place in England in connection with events in Poland, and had asked that the Congress be postponed until 1921.

The Italian affiliated organisation was not represented because of a conflict imminent in the metal industry.

The Luxemburg Federation also regretted that it found it impossible to attend.

Finally, the Russian Delegation, led by Mr. Schlappnikoff¹, had not been able to reach Copenhagen, as the Norwegian Government had refused to endorse their passports.

THE GENERAL REPORT.

Mr. A. Schlicke², the President of the Metal Workers' Federation of Germany and Secretary of the International Federation, presented the report.

He reminded the meeting that, at the Berlin Congress in 1913, precise and definite agreements were come to for the first time between the continental unions and the English unions. The latter had drawn up in this connection a complete constitution which was adopted by the Congress and which was to have been submitted to a referendum of the affiliated trade unions in the spring of 1914, but negotiations were interrupted by the war.

A detailed statement was then made concerning the intelligence and propaganda sections, the establishment of a translation office, representation at Congress, administration, membership, and numerical strength. This last showed that at the end of 1919 Germany had 1,349,583 out of a total membership of 2,500,000.

With regard to the removal of the seat of the International, the reporter stated that the first steps were taken in August 1915 by the British section, which asked that the seat should be established in Great Britain, but the secretariat, considering that the question could be settled only by a Congress, refused to proceed with this request. Immediately after the Armistice efforts were made by the secretariat to call an international congress, but without success. They were resumed after the

¹ Mr. Schlappnikoff, a delegate of the workers' organisation and people's commissary.

² Mr. Alexandre Schlicke, who in 1918 was deputy adviser on labour questions at the Economic Office of War, became Labour Minister in the Scheideemann Cabinet in Nov. 1918. He left the Government at the same time as the Müller Cabinet in the summer of 1920.

signature of peace. Originally fixed for the 1st June, 1920, the Congress had been postponed to the 20th July because of the elections in Germany, then, as a result of English counter-proposals, till August 20th.

Concluding Mr. Schlicke declared himself in favour of a transfer of the seat from Germany to a neutral country, events having made such a course necessary.

At the beginning of the discussion on the General Report it was understood that the question of war responsibility should be let alone and that only the future should be considered.

Some criticisms were voiced, mainly by the German delegate Mr. Dissmann¹, regarding the inactivity of the secretariat. Mr. Eeclers (Belgium), Mr. Kummer (Germany) and Mr. Stein (Austria) remarked on the absence of the British. Definite questions were also raised by M. Merrheim (France) with regard to the relations with the Russian organisations.

Mr. Schlicke, after having read the letter from the English Federation explaining its absence, stated that the Russian delegate, Mr. Schlapnikoff, had asked that the Congress should be adjourned, against which the English had protested. Mr. Schlapnikoff had then telegraphed to all the various countries that the International Secretariat was mismanaging the Congress.

Mr. Merrheim demanded very strongly that the Congress should be informed of the controversy which took place in the press between Mr. Hansen (Denmark), responsible for the organisation of the Congress, and the Russian delegation, in order that all the delegates might be able to explain in their own countries the absence of the Russians.

Mr. Hansen (Denmark) stated that in 1918 he went to Finland and to Switzerland, where he met Mr. Schlapnikoff, with whom he came to no understanding and had no dealings until June 1920. At that date he received a telegram accusing Mr. Schlicke of mismanaging the Congress. Mr. Schlapnikoff came and asked him to call a Congress independently of Mr. Schlicke, which he refused to do. The representatives from Stockholm and Christiania, called to Copenhagen, met Mr. Schlapnikoff, who made a speech on the Russian Revolution. As a result of this meeting, Mr. Schlapnikoff agreed that the Congress should be fixed for the 20th August, in accordance with the British proposals.

Mr. Merrheim wished to be able to reply to the reproaches which had been brought against the Federation of having

¹ Mr. Dissmann is the delegate of the Solingen District Metal Workers. In the Reichstag he belongs to the Independent Group which is opposed to Herr Schlicke, especially since the latter (the first of all the Majority Socialists to do so) accepted a Government post created to control the results of the law relating to civil mobilisation.

Mr. Dissmann, although he belongs to the Left of the Metal Workers' Federation, has declared himself very strongly against joining the Moscow International.

ignored the Russians because they were communists, and he insisted that the Congress should obtain all necessary information and documents. Mr. Hansen stated that there was no record of Mr. Schlapnikoff's speech.

The discussion was closed by the following vote on the Agenda sent in by Mr. Merrheim (France) :—

"The Eighth Congress of the International Federation of Metal Workers approves the General Report presented by the secretariat, and decides to pass to the discussion of the questions on the Agenda."

The Financial Report was afterwards adopted without discussion.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

This item dealt with the practical means of bringing about international reciprocity and of laying down the lines to be followed by the Federation in the future.

The secretary, Mr. Schlicke, blamed the English organisations, who had made no reply to his overtures, for the failure to maintain international relations during the war. He was of opinion that the International Labour Office at Geneva would be able to help the International Federation in resuming relations and generally in the study of social questions.

Mr. Schlicke made a statement regarding the alterations to be brought about in the constitution, and declared himself opposed to a centralised organisation. The Secretariat must not direct the Federation. Conferences of the Central Committee should be convened and these Conferences should be held in different places. Political questions should be decided by the national organisations.

Mr. V. Stein (Austria) declared himself in favour of close co-operation between the political and trade union organisations. Mr. F. Kummer (Germany), after some criticism of the Secretariat considered that it was essential that the International spirit, which is insufficiently "alive" in the English and Americans, should be developed. Propaganda in official newspapers was not enough; it must be carried on increasingly throughout the labour press. A permanent Secretariat must, moreover, be established, and a Secretary chosen. The Belgians and the French asked that the seat should be transferred to a neutral country, and that an Executive Committee should be set up. This proposal was absolutely justifiable. Only Holland and Switzerland were available, but, as it had not been possible to come to an agreement in Committee, a temporary secretariat might be established and the question postponed to a future Congress.

As the Belgian and French delegates were opposed to postponement, the Central Committee was asked to meet again in order to draw up a resolution which would be unanimously accepted by the Congress.

This resolution was submitted to the Congress by Mr. Dissmann, and gave rise to an important discussion in which the different points of view were developed.

Mr. Dissmann (Germany) was of the opinion that the Congress should express its agreement with the officers of the International Trade Union Bureau of Amsterdam, especially with regard to the aggressive policy of Poland.

The Central Committee had appointed a commission to draw up a resolution which would apply not only to the past war and to the Russo-Polish war, but to war generally. The army and the munition workers were the two factors in war. All war should be condemned as it can never solve economic and social questions.

Brute force was responsible for hindering the development of civilisation. Right had always been violated by might. In the past, neutrality had been violated in the name of right. In the same way the right of peoples to self-determination had been violated. The treaties of Brest-Litovsk, Versailles and St. Germain had not respected the rights of the workers. The statesmen had been guided by the interests of capitalists. At this moment the international situation was becoming complicated in every country.

Changes had occurred since the war, monarchies had fallen, but capitalism continued to govern the world. We were not in a position to judge the Russian system, but the proletariat was fighting for socialism and, if it was defeated, socialism also would be defeated. For that reason it was necessary to defend the Russian revolution. An appeal should be addressed to the Metal Workers engaged in the manufacture of munitions and the manufacture of war material should be prevented.

Mr. Richard Müller (Germany) was not satisfied with the result of this Congress. The absence of the Russian comrades showed the weakness of the labour movement. The Congress should be an example of increasing activity to the various sections of the International and should show them the road to follow.

Germany, like all the countries affected by the war, would shortly be in a revolutionary condition. They must prepare for direct action. The boycott of Hungary showed that the workers were ready.

It was not possible to give in a resolution all the forms of action, but it must be pointed out that the International should prevent the manufacture of munitions.

Although he was not in agreement with the majority of the Central Committee as to the methods of action, he gave his support in order to obtain a unanimous vote.

Mr. Merheim (France) agreed with the resolution drawn up by the Central Committee, but thought Mr. Müller was going outside the subject in discussing the tactics of the International. In view of the International's programme of action,

it was not possible to discuss it thoroughly at this unrepresentative Congress.

He rejoiced to see that the Germans were exhibiting a more revolutionary spirit than before the war, and that they were to-day condemning methods which they formerly excused. As for adopting the Russian method, that meant civil war in every country. He refused to accept this. In France there were ten million peasants to be taken into account.

In Russia there was not at present any trade union movement. A Central Committee had militarised the trade unionists, who came under army discipline in case of infringement of the law. At Moscow the creation of a new Trade Union International had been decided upon. It was said that the Russian revolution proclaimed the bankruptcy of Socialism; this was false: on the contrary he thought that Communism led to militarism.

It was necessary to seek out all means of strengthening the Trade Union International, but no one was entitled to decide for Russian methods unless he was prepared to let loose civil war in his own country. In Germany, moreover, as in the other countries, it must not be forgotten that the state of mind of the masses had not undergone such a great change, for the development of the strength of the trade unions since the war was due above all to material interests.

Mr. Hass (Germany) did not approve of Russian methods which were dominated by the militarism of Brussiloff. They were all against capitalism, and for socialism; but each country should be allowed to choose its own tactics.

Mr. Stein (Austria), said that he and Mr. Dissmann had asked for a resolution relating only to the war against Russia, for war in itself might be necessary for the defence of socialism.

The French and the Belgians had asked for a resolution against war in general, and against all wars. Methods of action were not under discussion; moreover, there was not sufficient information concerning the Bolshevik methods. In the interest of the workers it was essential that they should remain united and not split up the Trade Union International of Amsterdam.

After a fresh appeal by Mr. Dissmann for the adoption of the resolution prepared by the Central Committee, the latter was voted unanimously. This resolution condemned all war, "any occupation of a country and any intervention or interference open or disguised, by any Government whatsoever, in the free right of peoples freely to determine the form of their constitution or of their Government", as well as "any past or future violation of the neutrality or the independence of a nation, whatever pretext be put forward to justify such violation."

The resolution stigmatised the powerlessness of Governments to bring about peace and attacked the intervention in Russia. It confirmed the agreement of the International Federation of Metal Workers with the Trade Union International of Amsterdam.

THE EIGHT HOUR DAY.

The following motion, proposed by Mr. Merrheim (France), was adopted unanimously by the Congress without discussion :

"The Eighth International Congress of Metal Workers takes cognizance of the fact that in all the countries represented at the Congress, the Eight Hour Day insofar as it is in force has been obtained by Trade Union pressure and afterwards ratified by conventions and laws. It declares, therefore, that the duty of the organisations affiliated to the International Federation of Metal Workers is to secure that the principles contained in the International Labour Convention of Washington shall be introduced before the 1st July 1921 in the legal system of each country, and to oppose by all possible means any exemptions which have for their object the indefinite prolongation of the eight-hour day in violation of the principle of this reform."

THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE FEDERATION.

The Headquarters of the Federation.

Before discussion by the Congress, the following motion was adopted by the Central Committee fixing the new seat of the International Federation and at the same time its new administration.

- (1) The seat of the International Federation shall be transferred to Switzerland. The Swiss Federation of Metal Workers and Watch-makers is requested to make itself responsible for the Secretariat and the necessary preparations for the transfer of the seat.
- (2) The International Federation shall be administered by Executive officials including an International Secretary and three members elected by the Congress, account being taken of the three official languages at the Congress.
- (3) The Central Committee shall be maintained with the same powers as at present in accordance with the Constitution of the International Metalworkers' Federation.
- (4) The International Congress and its powers shall remain as at present.

Mr. Schlicke (Germany) enlarged upon the reasons justifying the transfer of the seat, a necessary step to overcome the suspicions of labour. After having stated the geographical reasons for which the Central Committee had chosen the town of Berne, Mr. Schlicke added that it was necessary to work for a closer co-operation with the Trade Union International of Amsterdam, in accordance with the mandate which had been given to the Zurich Conference in 1913.

As for the International Labour Office at Geneva, he considered that it was impossible to see in this Office an authority superimposed on Trade Union organisation. It was in the interests of the workers to support it, for it was developing in a direction favourable and advantageous to them. The Germans ought to participate more in its work. They should

collaborate in the same way as the representatives of other countries in the International Labour Office.

After an interruption by Mr. J. O. Johansson (Sweden), asking that the seat should be fixed at Copenhagen, the proposal of the Central Committee was put to the vote, and adopted.

The seat of the International Federation of Metal Workers will therefore be transferred to Berne.

Mr. Ilg, the delegate of the Swiss Organisation, was then appointed provisional International Secretary until the next Congress, which will take place in April 1921.

Appointment of the Executive.

The appointment of the Executive occasioned brisk discussion.

Mr. Brandes (Germany) considered that the appointment of the Executive should be referred back to the different countries. Mr. F. Donnes (Austria), asked, on the contrary, that they should be elected by the Congress and that the Scandinavians should have a representative. Mr. Ilg (Switzerland), after having reminded the Congress that Switzerland had not asked that the seat of the Federation should be established there and that she would only accept it in order to be of service to the International, insisted that the election should be carried out by the Congress, as the new Secretary could not enter upon his functions without his Office. Mr. Dissmann (Germany) declared himself in favour of the postponement of the appointment of the Executive until the Congress of 1921. In any case the National Organisations should make these appointments. Mr. Merrheim (France) insisted, on the contrary, that this nomination should be made by the Congress.

The principle of the nomination of the Executive by the Congress was put to the vote and adopted.

The appointment of the members gave rise to further discussion of a lively nature. Mr. Dissmann (Germany) asked that in appointing the Executive, the number of members whose subscriptions were paid up to date should be taken into account in accordance with the Constitution.

Mr. Merrheim (France) replied forcibly that during the whole Congress the French delegation had endeavoured to ignore the past, but that, since reference was now made to the Statutes, he was obliged to call attention to the fact that the International had remained in Germany during the war contrary to the Constitution.

Mr. Kummer (Germany) reproached Mr. Dissmann with trying to create a schism. The latter replied vigorously to these criticisms, reminding the Congress that he was one of those who had supported the International during the war.

After a short discussion with regard to the languages to be represented on the Executive, it was unanimously agreed that the following members should be appointed.

Switzerland Mr. Ilg, Secretary.
 Germany Mr. Dissmann.
 France Mr. Merrheim.
 Scandinavian Countries Mr. Hansen.
 Great Britain: The Committee would ask the British organisation to appoint its representative.

Revision of the Constitution.

The Belgian Metal Workers proposed some modifications to the Constitution. These aimed in particular at making the International Federation a centre of action and of life, not merely an office engaged in routine transmission of information; also to make the Secretariat responsible to the International Central Committee instead of being under the control of his own Organisation as heretofore.

These proposals, which met with the approval of the Congress were supported by the retiring Secretary, Mr Schlicke, who proposed, moreover, to define the tasks of the Federation as follows :—

Exchange of reports; publication and discussion of the more important events in connection with the trade union movement, economic activity and labour legislation; and publication of any documents making for international co-operation.

Improvement of the relations between the organisations of the various countries on the following lines :—

- (a) Defence of the rights of members of organisations affiliated to the Federation during their residence in foreign countries, and the drawing up of regulations concerning the transference of Trade Unionists belonging to the organisation of one country into that of another country.
- (b) Support of the efforts made in the interest of trade union organisation in the countries where Metal Workers Unions do not yet exist or are still weak.
- (c) Establishment and observation of the principles regulating moral and pecuniary help in times of strikes and lock-outs.
- (d) Organisation of International Congress of Metal Workers.

Before the Congress the British section had formulated proposals applying particularly to the relations between the Secretariat, the Central Committee and the national sections, to assistance in case of strikes, and to means of information,

all of which would come up for discussion at the revision of the Constitution. One of them, which concerns the International Labour Office is as follows :—

“ The Peace Treaty gives to the employers' and workers' organisations of all the associated countries the power to discuss and to come to an understanding on questions relating to the industrial problems of the said countries, and further to regulate the relations between them with the object of securing harmony, preventing unfair competition and securing uniformity in the legislation relating to industry in the different countries and in its application. The essential object of the Treaty is to prevent any conflict between national interests and to make misunderstandings between the Nations improbable, and, in case such misunderstandings should nevertheless arise, to provide means for conciliating the parties. Associating itself with the views of the Peace Treaty, and considering that the said object is in perfect harmony with the objects of the Federation, the Congress decides that, whenever the occasion arises it shall be free to lend assistance to, or to participate in the movements or conferences involved in, or proceeding from, the said Peace Treaty.”

Other proposals were presented relating to increased subscriptions, to the constitution of the Executive Committee, its powers and those of the Secretary, the jurisdiction of the Federated Organisations and of the International Congress.

Certain of these, such as the creation of the Executive Office, were decided, but in view of the fact that a further Congress is to be held in April 1921 at which all the National Organisations will be represented, the majority of these questions were only touched upon, and the general revision of the Constitution was referred to the Central Committee to be brought up at the next Congress.

* * *

Before the termination of the Congress, Mr. Merrheim, as spokesman of the Delegates, thanked Mr. Schlicke for the work which he had done for long years at the head of the Federation. After stating that in removing the seat of the Secretariat the sole aim of the Congress had been the reconstitution of the International, Mr. Merrheim appealed to all the organisations to develop together, in a spirit of solidarity and of mutual confidence, the power of the Trade Union International.

STUDIES AND REPORTS

already issued :

(1) — *In English and in French.*

COAL PRODUCTION IN THE RUHR DISTRICT. Enquiry by the International Labour Office, end of May 1920. (Series B No. 1, issued on September 1st 1920.)

STAFF REGULATION OF THE FRENCH RAILWAYS. (Series D No. 1, issued on September 8th 1920.)

THE CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN 1919. Denmark and Sweden. (Series H No. 1, issued on September 8th 1920.)

SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE BELGIAN CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE. (Series H No. 2, issued on September 25th 1920.)

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SPANISH WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS. (Series A No. 1, issued on September 25th 1920.)

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKERS IN THE FOOD AND DRINK TRADES. (Series A No. 4, issued on October 11th 1920.)

THE MINERS' INTERNATIONAL. (Series A No. 7, issued on October 19th 1920.)

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION A COMPARISON (Series A No. 8, issued on October 21th 1920.)

(2) — *In English only.*¹

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS 1920. (Series A No. 3, issued on October 4th 1920.)

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE MINERS' FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN. (Series A No. 5, issued on October 13th 1920.)

(3) — *In French only.*¹

LE CONFLIT DES MÉTALLURGISTES EN ITALIE. — LE CONTRÔLE SYNDICAL DANS L'INDUSTRIE. (Series A No. 2, issued on September 25th 1920.)

DOCUMENTS RELATIFS AUX PROJETS D'ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA RÉPARTITION DES MATIÈRES PREMIÈRES OU DES DENRÉES ALIMENTAIRES. (Series B No. 2, issued on October 5th 1920.)

LE CONGRÈS DE L'INTERNATIONALE OUVRIÈRE ET SOCIALISTE. (Series A No. 6, issued on October 14th 1920.)

¹ In cases where the English or French text of a Report has not yet been published, it will be issued at a later date.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

GENEVA

May 27th 1920.

Studies and Reports
Series A
No. 10

The British Government and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

THE CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TRIPLE INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE.

On the 22nd September, 1920, an important Conference took place between the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Triple Industrial Alliance (consisting of miners, railwaymen and transport workers) in connection with the claims of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.

The claims of the miners were originally formulated at their Annual Conference which commenced on the 6th July. These claims were as follows:

That the price of household coal be reduced by 14/2d per ton¹.
That wages be increased 2/- a shift for men, 1/- for youths and -9d for boys.

On 26th July, the Government definitely declined to concede these claims.

On 1st September, a ballot of the miners declared in favour of a strike by 606,782 votes to 238,865. Strike notices were handed in to terminate in all districts not later than 25th September.

The President of the Board of Trade, Sir Robert Horne, invited the miners' executive to meet him on 9th September "in order to avoid any misunderstandings as to our respective points of view."

A verbatim report of the proceedings of this Conference was published in the *Studies and Reports of the International Labour Office*, Series A, No. 5.

¹ On 12th May 1920, the British Government raised the controlled price of household coal by 14/2d per ton.